

BELMONT COUNCIL ON AGING
Minutes
Meeting of December 8, 2008

Present: Joel Semuels – chair, John Brusch, Diana Dick, Ethel Hamann, Neil Hegarty, Jack Kantor, Henry Kazarian, Anne Lougee, Judy Morrison, Angela Santoro Mullin, Phyl Solomon, Nava Niv-Vogel – director.

Call to order: The meeting was called to order in Room # 4 of the Town Hall by Chairman J. Semuels at 7 pm .

Minutes: The minutes of the November 3, 2008 were approved as amended with one correction. The last sentence in the 2nd paragraph should read “At the December meeting, the Committee will nominate a slate of officers who will be voted on at the next meeting.”

Senior Citizen Concerns: There were none.

Announcements: New board member Judy Morrison was introduced.

Springwell: Neil Hegarty gave an overview of the agency and its services for the new board members.

Highlights of the Annual Meeting on November 20, 2008 included a new mission statement that emphasizes “a commitment to the individual’s right to live independently in the community”. While implicit in the past, the new focus is on each person’s right to choose how and where they wish to receive services.

Springwell has been affected by cuts in state funding but is managing by making cost in areas that are most removed from direct client services. **Although there have been adjustments in the budget, the agency has not cut client services and is making it clear to the community that “Springwell is open and available to clients.”**

The total agency budget is about \$15,000,000- \$14,000,000 of which is provided by government contracts for services. The Commonwealth and federal government purchase services from Springwell. There is an additional \$1,000,000 that must be raised annually by the agency to provide services that are required and essential but are not fully covered by state contracts.

Service Highlights include:

*Information to consumers. Over 8,400 requests for information and referral services are provided.

*15,000 consultations and home visits to 3,000 individuals

*263,808 hours of personal and homemaking services.

*208,687 meals provided through the nutrition service.

*803 reports of alleged abuse reported, resulting in 605 open investigations

Director’s Report: Nava is still looking for a lifeguard to cover the senior swim on Tuesday and Thursday from 9 – 10 am. Nava will explore what coverage for liability the Town has and what training the Red Cross requires for lifeguard certification. Another option being investigated is to rent time at a nearby pool and providing transportation.

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A regular custodian is not being assigned to the Senior Center. A letter will be sent from the Board supporting the need to have a dedicated person assigned to the Center.

Meeting with the Board of Selectmen: The Board meeting was interrupted so that the board could meet with the Selectmen and present the COA's choice for the official name of the new Center. After some discussion the Selectmen unanimously voted to approve the recommended name, which is: **Beech Street Center: Belmont Council on Aging. Friends of COA:** Anne Lougee reported that the crafts fair was very successful. Next year even more vendors can be included in the new space. The membership drive to date has resulted in an organization comprised of 230-240 members, of which 30% are new. Approximately \$13,000 in membership dues and donations has been received to date from the drive.

Senior Center Building Committee: Construction is running about 30 days behind schedule. It should be ready to open the end of April early May.

Addendum to Director's Report-news from the MCOA Advisory Council: Nava highlighted two areas of interest. 1. The leadership is pushing to have senior centers be considered wellness centers and to be reimbursed by HMOs in the long term. 2. Senior centers should be a place to retool job skills when seniors consider changing jobs or seek volunteer opportunities in retirement.

Payment to Springwell: Each COA in the catchment area has traditionally paid \$250 each year to Springwell as a token match for all they provide. Belmont has not done this for the last two years as a result of the Town's accounting office interpretation of state law with regard to such types of payment. This issue is of importance to the Belmont COA because of the close working relationship that the agency enjoys with Springwell and because Springwell provides so many needed services to seniors in the community. It was agreed that Joel Semuels, chair, will follow up on this issue with the Town Administrator.

Nominating Committee report: The following slate of officers will be voted on at the upcoming board meeting.

Chair: Ethel Hamann

Vice Chair: Henry Kazarian

Treasurer: Neil Hegarty

Policies for Fitness Room Use in the New Center: A sub-committee has been selected to work on policies and rules for the fitness room and use of equipment at the new center. The members are Phyl Solomon, Joel Semuels, Judy Morrison and John Bruschi (consultant).

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

The next Board meeting will be on Monday, January 5 at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ethel Hamann